

Antarctic Campaign Programme

†574. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Antarctic Campaign Programme has been finalized;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the criteria for selection of members of the team going to Antarctic;
- (d) whether the team going to Antarctic consists of scientists and technicians only; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) yes, Sir. The XXVI Indian Antarctic Expedition team consisting of 43 scientists and 14 logistics personnel is presently at Antarctica carrying out research work there. The researchers drawn from 19 national organisations are working in the fields of Atmospheric Sciences, Glaciology, Ice Core Drilling, Biology and Environmental Sciences, Human Physiology & Medicine and Engineering and Communication. The expedition after completing work at the Maitri Station, will go to the Larsemann Hills area of the Antarctica where India is planning to establish a new station before returning back in March, 2007 end.

(c) Selection of the Scientific team is done by National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (CNCAOR), Goa by inviting research proposals. This is followed by screening of the proposals by NCAOR. Short-listed proposals are evaluated by Groups of Experts under five categories namely, Meteorology and Atmospheric Sciences; Earth Sciences and Glaciology; Biology and Environmental Sciences; Human Physiology & Medicine and Engineering and Communication. The selected projects and the composition of the expedition team is then finalised by the National Committee for Antarctic programme, headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences. The logistics team is selected by Ministry of Defence. The team members then undergo a medical fitness test carried out by All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, while the wintering team members also undergo a psychological test.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) and (e) The Expedition team consisting of Scientists and Technical/ Logistics Personnel has two components, the Summer and a Winter Team. Summer team mainly consists of scientists while the wintering team consists of scientists and logistics personnel comprising of engineers, technicians and other support staff.

New warning system on impending tsunami disasters

575. SHRI VAJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that new warning system about the impending tsunami disasters would be in place by September, 2007;

(b) if so, whether this system will be fool-proof and the time frame by when it will trigger warnings;

(c) whether it will be prior to impending disaster or after this and the modalities adopted to take affected people to safer places; and

(d) whether it will be placed at one place and will relay the warning over the affected areas and will the local authorities be active with in this response period?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The National Early Warning System for Tsunami and Storm Surges in Indian ocean, is scheduled to be operational by September 2007. After the detection of an undersea earthquake event potentially capable for generating tsunami, the progression of the tsunami waves and the level of water will be monitored for validating the occurrence of tsunami. A tsunami advisory generated after the watch will be fool-proof. An interim warning center already exists at Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad and alert is issued after 30 minutes of an earth quake event of greater than 6.5 magnitude on Richter scale.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The warnings will be issued before the disaster. Coastal areas will be identified with respect to their vulnerability to various scenarios of tsunamis using tsunami models. Integrated Operation Centre (IOC) of the Ministry of Home Affairs has systems in place for dissemination of warning/advisories using Country Wide Instant Alert Network. Hotline,